

Riverside Health Centre

Patient Participation Group (PPG)

Minutes

Meeting on 29th November 2024 at 1300

Present: Jill Clarkson, Jill Farmer, Pamela Gibbons, Zoe Cronin, Hugh Cronin, Deirdre Conn (Chair), Anne Walker, Katie Byford.

Apologies: were received from Iris Marr, Carmel Lo, Jan McDonald, Ruth Frost and Susan Wootten- the last four are new members who still want to be a part of the group.

1. Welcome and introductions by new members.

Deirdre thanked the new members who had attended and explained that she would Chair the meeting until the current Chair, Iris, was able to return.

2. Minutes of the meeting on 23 September:

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed, and there were no items outstanding.

3. Overview of the PPG and Terms of Reference:

The Terms of Reference for the PPG had been updated in September 2023 and could be amended if necessary.

4. Update of PPG Network meeting held on 30th October:

Anne gave an update on the two South and North East Essex (SNEE) online meetings that she had taken part in. She explained that anyone could register on the SNEE site where various information was available and where and how to access support i.e. mental health, child health and menopause etc.

Another level of support to the Chairs of PPG's. was available, and Anne explained that she found the information regarding the new pilot scheme for Pharmacy First very useful. The scheme would involve the pilot of pharmacies taking part in scheme, being able to refer directly to the emergency care centres. There is an extra level on SNEE for PPG Chairs, which would give information on the future plans of the Integrated Care Board.

5. News from the Practice

- Katie told the group about the new phone system at the surgery, which would allow patients to select to be called back, rather than having to stay on the line, the system would automatically call back at the time they were in the queue.

- Another new system being introduced at the end of January is Anima - an online system for appointments, messages and enquiries. It is anticipated that the system will reduce waiting times for appointments, as patients will be triaged, and directed to the appropriate person for their treatment, i.e. GP, Practice Nurse, Nurse Practitioner or Social Prescriber.

There were some concerns raised as to the problems that could arise if a patient was not computer literate, or did not have access to online technology. Katie reassured the group that patients could still phone the surgery, and the receptionists would help complete the online form for them.

- Katie advised the group that the practice still had some flu vaccines available for patients over the age of 65. Also the RSV (respiratory) vaccine was available to the over 75's, and patients could book directly with the practice.
- Katie advised the group that Sophie, the Social Prescriber was leaving at the end of December, but a new prescriber had been employed and would work alongside Sophie until she left. It was explained that the social prescriber could assist with weight management, bereavement counselling etc. and could direct patients to various organisations and voluntary groups as necessary.
- Deirdre gave Katie the suggestions that had been posted in the box in the waiting room. Comments were raised about the layout of the surgery, in so much that there was no confidentiality in the reception and waiting area. Katie explained that this was really out of their control, as the building was very small and also it was not owned by the GPs, but by the Co-op.
- Anne asked if the practice had endeavoured to access Section 106 monies, (community infrastructure money) or new improvement premises grants, in order to expand the building or relocate. Katie explained that Mel (Practice Manager) and the partners had been negotiating for over 20 years to try to get agreement from the town council for an extension or new build and plans had been drawn up, and meetings attended, but for various reasons i.e. underground pipe work, these negotiations had not been successful.

6. Any Other Business

It was suggested that possibly a medic could attend some of the meetings. Katie explained of the difficulty of this due to the workload of the GP's and nurses. She would however discuss this at the next practice meeting.

7. Date for the next meeting

Discussion was had about the best day of the week for the PPG meeting. The reception area is occupied on a number of days at lunchtime so it was decided that the group should meet again on **Monday 17th February at 1300** in the Reception.